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THE ZENDAVESTA AND THE FIRST ELEVEN CHAPTERS OF GENESIS.

IN a paper read before the Jewish Ministers' Association of America, in May, 1889, I showed that many legends told of Zoroaster are founded on the accounts of men celebrated in the Bible. Moreover we find that not only did the Parsees not disdain from embellishing the story of their teacher with traits derived from Biblical heroes, but even their sacred Book the Zendavesta seems to be based, to some extent, on our Bible. Remember that Zoroaster's home, according to Spiegel, was not Bactria, as is generally supposed, but Westerân, near Ararât, where the Indo-Germanic tribes from the earliest ages bordered on Semitic nations, and Erân seems to be identical with Harân, whence the Hebrews derive their origin. The Parsees, therefore, very easily had access to the old Hebrew traditions, and very probably made use of them in shaping their ideas and the system of their religion. To say that the opposite is true, that the Parsic ideas were original, is impossible, for the Zendavesta is of a later date; and, besides, at the time when the Parsees were wrapped in legendary rudiments, the Hebrews already stood on the height of monotheism, and possessed a pure conception of the God idea. True, during the later period of Jewish history, in the Babylonian exile, the Jews borrowed some ideas from their Parsic neighbours, as I have already proven;¹ we may, however, still assume that they also gave to the Parsees many fundamental principles of faith and many traditions, especially those on cosmogony.

In connection with and partly supplementary to my essay in the *Zeitschrift d. d. M.G.*, vol. xxv., pp. 59 ff., I would draw attention to the following points, which I hope will be received with welcome by English readers. The very fact that the Parsees assume for the creation of the world six periods, and that man is the crown of creation, reminds us at the very outset of the first chapter of Genesis. But a parallelism in minute

¹ See my "Angelology" and several essays in the *Z. d. d. M. G.*

details can be followed out by comparing the Yima legend of the Zendavesta with the scriptural account, and this leaves us without doubt that the Hebrew tradition lies at the basis.

The second Fargard of the Vendidâd, devoted to the first man, Yima, should be analysed in this connection.

I. After having told in §§ 4 and 5 how Ahuramazda first spoke with Yima, and how (§§ 6-11) Yima refused to disseminate and teach the Law, the account tells us :

"If thou, Yima, wilt not be bearer and propagator of the Law, then propagate my worlds, fructify my worlds, be the nourisher, guardian and sovereign of my earthly creatures."¹ Compare with this address, Gen. i. 28, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over," etc.

§§ 20-23 dwell on the extraordinary blessings that will replenish the earth with cattle and fowl of every kind—a description strongly reminding us of Gen. i. 22.

II. The next paragraph is difficult. It reads² in Spiegel's translation : "Thereupon Yima went forth toward the stars, toward the south, the path toward the sun." The commentators are at a loss to explain this, and as a guess, suggest that the text intended to admonish man to pray a "Yathâ ahû vairyô," before setting out on business, and that in consequence he would prosper.³ I fail, however, to see how this meaning can be contained in the passage quoted ; besides this does not fit in with the context of the whole passage.

If we, on the other hand, compare this passage with Gen. ii. 8, we clearly see its meaning. The Bible tells us : "And the Lord planted a garden **מִקְדָּם** eastward in Eden, and placed therein the man he had formed." Now then, if Yima turn his steps eastward toward the sun, he does what we would expect him to do, and thus the similarity of the two passages is confirmed. And the proof of the identity of the sources is the following paragraph : "He pierced the earth with a golden lancet,—he pricked it with a prickles, saying lovingly : O Çpenta Armaît (earth), go forth and spread out those bearers of cattle

¹ Cf. Vendidâd Sâde, edit. Brockhaus. Yêzi mê yima nôit vivîcê meretô beretaca daënyâi, âat mê gaëthaô frâdaya âat mê gaëthaô varedhaya âat mê viçpâi gaëthanâm thrâtâca haretâca aiwyâkhçtaca.

² Âat yimô frasûçat raocâo â upa rapithwâm hû paiti adhwanem.

³ Cf. Spiegel's Commentary to Avesta, p. 59, and his Introduction to the Parsic Traditions, ii. 83. Similarly Berach, 14a, **אָסוּר לֹא לַאֲדָרָם לַעֲשׂוֹת חֻצְיוֹ** אֶסֶר לֹא לַאֲדָרָם לַעֲשׂוֹת חֻצְיוֹ קוֹדֵם שִׁיתַּפֵּל "It is forbidden to go to one's task without having first prayed."

and men."¹ Accordingly Yima tilled the ground, as Adam is said to have done. (Gen. ii. 5, 15.)

III. That this interpretation is correct, and "toward the sun" means eastward (מקדם), is clearly shown in the following paragraph:

"There Ahuramazda, the creator, made a gathering of the heavenly Yazatas around the renowned Airyana-vaêja of the good creation." And further on in § 45 we are told "That Yima, the beautiful, was in that assembly."² Now we also understand whither Yima went when he turned his steps eastward, for the Airyana-vaêja was in the extreme East.³

Moreover vaêjarih means "fountain place" corresponding to גן עדן where the sources of four rivers were. (Gen. ii. 10.) Let me here mention the fact that the Parsees also had a legend of two trees, one named Gaokerena, bearing the white Haoma fruit, which will be used at the resurrection, and the other tree bears fruit assuring freedom from suffering.⁴

IV. From § 46 onward, the author of the second Fargard has in mind the account of the deluge. The commentaries refer to the rain Malkoshân (מלקוש), which, according to a prophecy, is to descend in torrents in the last days. § 59 however clearly shows that the deluge is meant. This is the sense of the following passage:

"Clouds, O Yima, will come to the crowded place" (of men).⁵

And the "Vara," the piece of ground which Yima was to fence around all sides closely resembles not only in general outlines, but even in small details the ark of Noah, cf. § 61-129. Thus the first of these paragraphs tells us how Yima was ordered to make the circuit of a race-course with its four corners. Noah's ark was also secluded from without and within. (Gen. vi. 14.)

V. In the next paragraph Yima is commanded to bring the seeds of cattle and men, even as Noah should bring "of every living thing, of all flesh . . . into the ark to keep them alive" (Gen. vi. 19), and in § 66, as in Gen. vi. 20, fowl are especially mentioned.

¹ Hô imâm zâm aiwisvať çuwrya zaramačnyâ avidim çifať astraya uiti aojanô fritha çpeñta armaiti fracasava vaca nemanha berethra paçvâmca çtaoranâmca maskyânâmca.

² Hañjamanem frabereta yô adhvâo ahurô mazdâo hathra mainyaobyô yazataêibyô çrûtô airyaénê vaéjahê vanuhyâo daítiaýâo.

³ Cf. Justi Zendlexicon, p. 259.

⁴ See my Eschatology, &c., in *Z. d. d. M. G.* vol. 21, 589, ff.

⁵ Abdaca idha Yima anuhê açtvaitê cadayât. I followed the translation of Spiegel in rendering *abdaca* with "clouds" which is only suitable to the deluge. (Gen. vi. 13 ff.)

§ 67 says: Bring (fowl) with yellow grain and inexhaustible food:¹ compare therewith Gen. vi. 21, "And take thou unto thee all food that is eaten and gather it to thee."

In § 76 this is brought out more prominently: "And thither bring the seed of all food."² §§ 70 and 72 again repeat: Bring the seed of men and of all kinds of cattle, just as it is again repeated, Gen. vii. 2.

VI. In this Vara, Yima was ordered (§§ 68 and 69) to erect lodgings in several lofts, to have pillars, yards and fences.³ So Noah built his Ark with a lower, second and a third story. (Gen. vi. 16.)

And if we are told (§ 78) that of all cattle and beasts there came two and two,⁴ who would not suppose it to be an almost literal translation of Gen. vi. 20: "Two of every sort shall come unto thee to be kept alive."

Similarly in § 92 Ahuramazda tells Yima⁵ to make around the circuit a high door,⁶ and a window to illumine the interior even as Noah is told (Gen. vi. 16), "Make thou a light (צוּר) for the Ark, and place its door in the side thereof." It is remarkable that the Hebrew word, just mentioned, is rendered "window," and also "self-lighting," and the Zend word is equally ambiguous.

VII. The paragraphs following this, up to § 129 give a full account of how Yima acted in accordance with the received instruction, and the Vendidad-sâde⁷ add the clause: "And Yima did as Ahuramazda wanted," just as Gen. vii. 5 says: "And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him."

Important also for our parallelism are §§ 123, 124,⁸ viz.: "On the top he made nine bridges, in the middle he made six, and below three," referable to וְשֵׁלִישׁ בְּתוֹמֵי (Gen. vi. 16).

¹ Aoi maṭ zairi gaonem maṭ quairycîtê ajyamnem.

² Hathra viçpanâm quaretanâm taokhma upa bara.

³ Hathra nmânâo avaçtaya katemca fraçkembemca fravâremca pairi vâremca.

⁴ Tê kerenâva mithwarê ajyamnem viçpem â ahmât.

⁵ Aipitâtem varem marezud-varem raocanem qaraukhsnem aūtare naçmât.

⁶ Marezudvara is to be translated with "door," as Windischman renders it, and not with "wall," as Spiegel has it. The Minokhired in the like manner says: "Then they will open the doors of the vâr which Jemshîd (= Yima) made, and out of that doors men, cattle, and every creature will go forth to restore the world," (cf. Spiegel *Parsigram*, p. 167, §21 ff.). This can be understood only in the light of our interpretation, that the passage refers to the deluge, for only so can we suppose men, cattle, and creatures to repopulate the world.

⁷ Aaṭ yimô avathô kerenôit yatha dem isaṭ ahurô mazdâo.

⁸ Fratmem dainhéus nava perethwô kerenaoit madhemô khsavas nitemô tisarô.

VIII. Nor are the closing paragraphs (132-136) to be overlooked. The first two of these tell us that¹ "at one step there are to be seen the stars, the moon and the sun. They hold a year for one day." The sense of this statement is, according to Spiegel,² there is no difference between night and day to the happy inhabitants of Yima's vâr. In my opinion this remark is an outgrowth of the Biblical *ויהי ערב ויהי בקר* (Gen. i. 5), understood by the author of the second Fargard to mean that evening and morning coincided so as to make one day.

IX. The remark of § 134 that every forty years, a pair, a female and a male child, is born from the two men is so far in accordance with the Biblical account that Eden was inhabited only by one pair of human beings.

These abrupt reflections, however, are in themselves incoherent and very likely added by a later writer.³ And indeed the Fargard in several passages⁴ indicates that there were many in Yima's vâr. Consequently the expression *taêca narô* "those men" of § 136 refers to the many people about Yima.

X. To these proofs of coinciding ideas between the Fargard of the Zendavesta and the Biblical account, may be added some taken from the Bundelesh, a compilation of cosmogonic and theogonic traditions, from an unknown author, whose date is not yet fixed. That these traditions of Parsic folk-lore, however, are very old, perhaps of not very much more recent date than the Zendavesta itself, was made evident by Windischman and Spiegel.

The Bundelesh calls the first human beings Meshia and Meshiâne, and devotes to their history the whole of the very interesting fifteenth chapter.

Our attention, however, is already attracted by some previous remarks. In the third chapter, for instance, we find the narration of how the evil spirit Ganâmino (Ahriman) battled against the good spirit (Ahura), and finally leapt from heaven to earth in the shape of a serpent to spoil the creatures. Who is not reminded of the serpent tempting Eve?⁵ This book also knows of the two trees and the four rivers of

¹ *Hakereṭ zî irikhtahê çadhayaca vaçnaêta çtaraçca mâoçca hvareca.*

² See Spiegel's *Translation of the Avesta*, p. 77 note 3.

³ Cf. Roth: *Die Sage vom Dschemschid in the Zeitschrift der d. M. G.*, vol. iv., p. 417 ff.

⁴ See §§ 43, 63, 70, 79, 125.

⁵ A very remarkable conformity with the Parsic conception is to be found in Yalkut, Gen. §25, cf. Kohut, "Angelology," etc., p. 65.

Paradise;¹ it affirms furthermore, that the world was created in six periods, namely: Ormuzd first created the heaven, then water, then the earth, the trees, animals and finally man. The fourth chapter tells us how primeval man, Gayomarth, emanated from the right side of the primeval bull.² The Mugmil ut-tewârich³ has a different version. After an interval of thirty days, it narrates, the bull died, and its seed fell from its loins to the ground. Of this seed purified in the moon man was made, and the *breath of life* was breathed into his body (chap. 10). The background of this myth is the shaping of Eve from Adam's side, and with the last quoted phrase compare Gen. ii. 7, ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים, which is to be translated: "And he breathed into his FACE a breath of life."

XI. As has been mentioned before, full particulars of the history of the first man are found in the fifteenth chapter. Here we are informed how Ahura, after having created Meshia and Meshiâne, addressed them, saying:

"Ye are men, beings of life are ye," parallel to the Hebrew text: "And man was a living being" (soul), Gen. ii. 7.

XII. Flesh of animals is prohibited to the first men; only after they had transgressed the commandment of Ahura they were permitted to eat it. With this compare Gen. i. 30, and ix. 3. The fifteenth chapter continues to tell us how the first men disobeyed Ahura by hunting (cf. the characters of Nimrod, Ishmael and Esau), and how they clad themselves in fur (cf. Gen. iii. 21).

XIII. Thereupon they dug in the earth and found iron, which they sharpened to a hatchet (cf. Gen. iv. 22, where it is said of Tubal Cain that he was "the forger of copper and iron cutlery").

XIV. After this men felled a tree and made tents for themselves. Cf. *ibidem* 20, "He was the father of all tent-dwellers."

XV. Hereafter they aroused against each other wicked (aparun) envy, and smote one another (Gen. iv. 5; envy led Cain to fratricide).

¹ See note 4, page 225.

² The primeval bull (gaûs aêvo-dâtô) and the primeval man (gayômaratha,) are often mentioned in the Zend text, cf. "Angelology," 46. So in the Talmud (Ab. Zara 8a; Sabb. 28b, Chul. 60a,) Adam is brought in connection with the fabulous bull—but with a moral tendency, see my remark in the *Zeitsch. d. d. M. G.*, vol. xxv., p. 78.

³ Cf. Windischman *Zoroastrische Studien*, p. 212 ff.

XVI. After a lapse of fifty years from the loss of their innocence, first Meshia, then Meshiâne felt the pangs of desire (Gen. iv. 1, after the departure from Eden, והאדם ידע את חווה ואשרו).

XVII. To Meshia and Meshiâne (cf. Gen. iv. 1) were born seven pairs of children, of which the third pair was named Fravâk and Fravâkam, a word often met with in the Zendavesta connected with Ahuramazda's name.¹ He seems, accordingly, to have been a sort of Enosh, in whose days "men began to call on the name of the Lord" (Gen. iv. 26).

XVIII. The human race increasing thus by pairs, from whom the advancement of generations of the living originated (cf. Gen. x. 25, 32), scattered and disseminated itself in the different parts of the earth. The fifteenth chapter of the Bundeshesh winds up its rich contents with the remark that is made in Gen. xi. 1 too, that after the increase of the human race migration began.

XIX. Thus by diligently comparing similar features of the first eleven chapters of Genesis, with the counterparts in the Yima legend of the Zendavesta, and the Meshia legend of the Bundeshesh, we cannot but come to the conclusion that the former is the original, while the latter, though shaped and fashioned in Eranian manner, used the Bible as model. On the other hand we can prove a reciprocity; namely, that these same Yima and Meshia legends, divested of their Parsic stamp and remoulded with Jewish conceptions, served as patterns for Talmudic-Midrashic legends and myths concerning Adam. Of this topic a second article shall treat. This separation, of not only technical but of material importance, should remind us that in the interchange of type and model, we must carefully draw the demarcation lines and be guided by the just axiom: *Suum cuique!*

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¹ Cf. Visper xviii. 7, 13; Yaçna xix. 37, 57; Din. Y. 3, etc.